

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 07-33

Proposed Acquisition of Elementary/High School Site on York Road near Grand Palisades Parkway

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) proposes to acquire approximately 100 acres for two school sites on the south side of NC Highway 49 (York Road), east of Grand Palisades Parkway in order to build an elementary school, a high school and allow potential joint use with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation. These 100 acres are a portion of multiple properties totaling approximately 195 acres being assembled by Rhein-Medall, the developer of The Palisades, a 1,500 acre master planned community located south and west of the subject site.

In 2001, as part of the conditional rezoning process, the Palisades developer agreed to donate a 24-acre site for an elementary school and a park. The site was located west of the Palisades town center commercial area on Walnut Hill Road near a traffic circle. Subsequent discussions between CMS and the developer revealed that a better use for this site was to expand the commercial center, and a more suitable site for the school is the one under current consideration.

Thirty acres of the site is therefore proposed to be donated to CMS to be used as an elementary school and park site (tax parcel numbers 217-101-07, 217-101-06, and 217-101-10). CMS also proposes to purchase up to 70 acres of additional property located immediately to the east of the donated property for the construction of a high school (portions of tax parcel numbers 217-301-01, 217-013-35, 217-013-34, 217-101-05 and 217-101-04). The sites are located within Charlotte's extraterritorial jurisdiction.

The parcels are located within an area which is zoned R-3, Single Family Residential, according to the Charlotte Zoning ordinance. The immediate vicinity includes vacant land, institutional and residential uses. The property is at the northern boundary of the proposed Palisades community master site plan, east of the proposed Palisades Town Center and its commercial area. The Palisades master plan includes natural open space, a private golf course, a tennis center, and bike paths into the community's design with 2,000 new homes. The Palisades will also include a soccer complex, equestrian center and seven miles of trails for jogging, hiking and horse back riding. The homes will range in price from the mid \$200,000's to over \$2 million.

Adjacent to the north of the subject site is York Road, the main thoroughfare through the southwestern portion of Mecklenburg County. Across York Road from the site is a church and the McDowell Nature Preserve. To the east is an older single family residential development. To the south is vacant land that may be developed as part of the Palisades community at some future stage, and to the west are older single family residences which are proposed to be redeveloped as part of the Palisades Town Center project.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools *Long Range School Facilities Master Plan* (2005 interim report) identifies the need to build a new elementary school in this approximate location within the next ten years. In addition, the *Master Plan* highlighted the need for a high school in the southwestern portion of the county within the next ten years (the site is located six miles southwest of Olympic High School).

Recognizing the need for additional classroom space, the Palisades developer agreed to donate land needed for the elementary school and park (this is in lieu of an elementary school site in the Town Center area that was offered as part of the original Palisades conditional rezoning in 2001).

The proposed elementary school site currently lies within the Lake Wylie Elementary School attendance boundary and will relieve overcrowding at the southwest county elementary schools including Lake Wylie elementary school. Lake Wylie Elementary is approximately 3.7 miles northeast of this site. Winget Park Elementary is approximately 3.3 miles to the northeast.

The overcrowding of elementary and high schools is a result of the population growth that has occurred in the southwestern portion of Mecklenburg County. Growth is expected to continue as additional subdivisions are developed in that area.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The Zoning Ordinance allows for elementary schools within R-3 residential zoning. Schools are generally considered to be compatible with residential land uses. The integration of schools and neighborhoods is encouraged.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Southwest District Plan* (1991) as updated by the *Westside Strategic Plan* (2000) calls for the site to be low-density Single Family Residential. The *Westside Strategic Plan* calls for the construction of new state-of-the art schools, as part of its Implementation Strategies for improving the quality of education in the area. The site is a large parcel fronting on York Road, a state highway and major thoroughfare. The proposed schools are consistent with the specific low-density

residential land use depicted in the mapping of the Southwest District Plan and Westside Strategic Plan, subject to prescribed conditions contained within the Zoning Ordinance.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The property is located at the northern boundary of The Palisades residential community with 2,000 proposed home sites. The property is strategically located to address elementary school enrollment growth in this region of Mecklenburg County. The opening of a new elementary school in this area would relieve overcrowding at Lake Wylie Elementary School.

The school sites will have access from the main thoroughfare through the area, York Road (also known as NC Highway 49). Additional access may be provided from a road to be constructed by the developer that will connect to Grand Palisades Parkway.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

There are no known public or private projects that will be adversely impacted by this project. The property is located near the proposed residential development known as Palisades.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION

Site acquisition will be funded from the 2007 bond referendum. Funding for the elementary school building was also included in the 2007 referendum. High school funding will be included in a future bond referendum.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

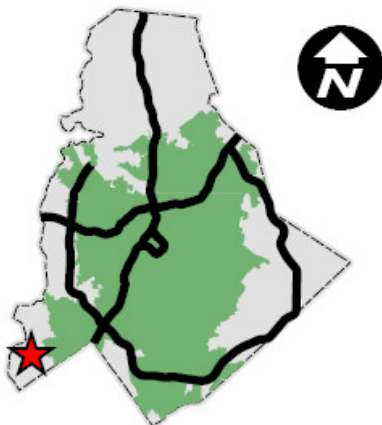
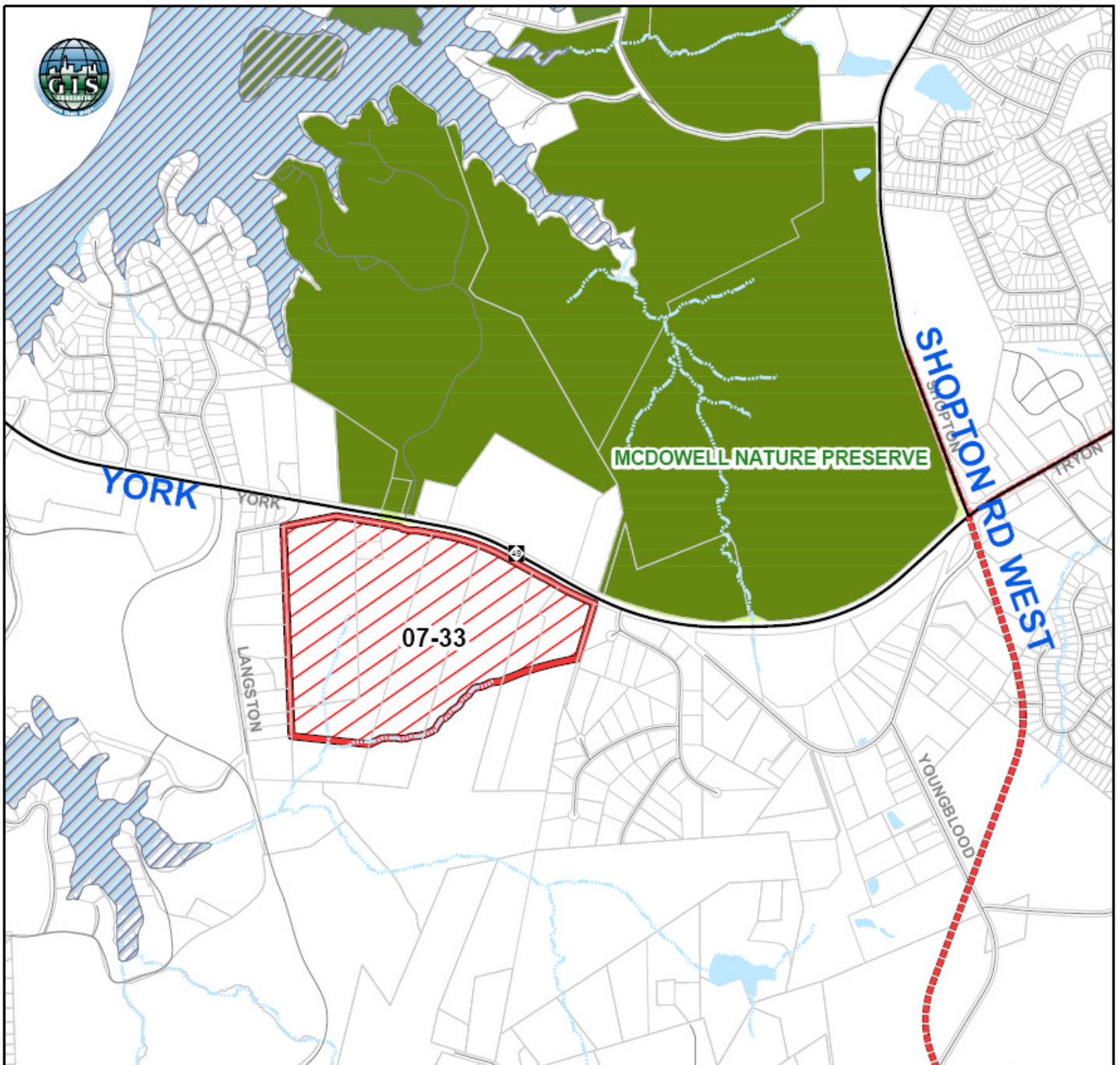
The matter was discussed at the December 5, 2007 Joint Use Task Force, where mention was made of the fact that a portion of the site will be developed by Park & Recreation for parkland and recreational purposes.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the proposal, subject to careful building siting as contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Committee recommended approval by a 7-0 vote at their December 18, 2007 meeting.



Mandatory Referral 07-33

CMS Real Estate Department

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| — Existing Thoroughfare | Existing Park |
| - - - Proposed Thoroughfare | Proposed Park |
| Mandatory Referral | Greenway |
| | Preserve |